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Fiftieth Anniversary Year

JOHN KNOBLE **FACING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS**

SISYPHUS **POST-WATERGATE RECONSTRUCTION**

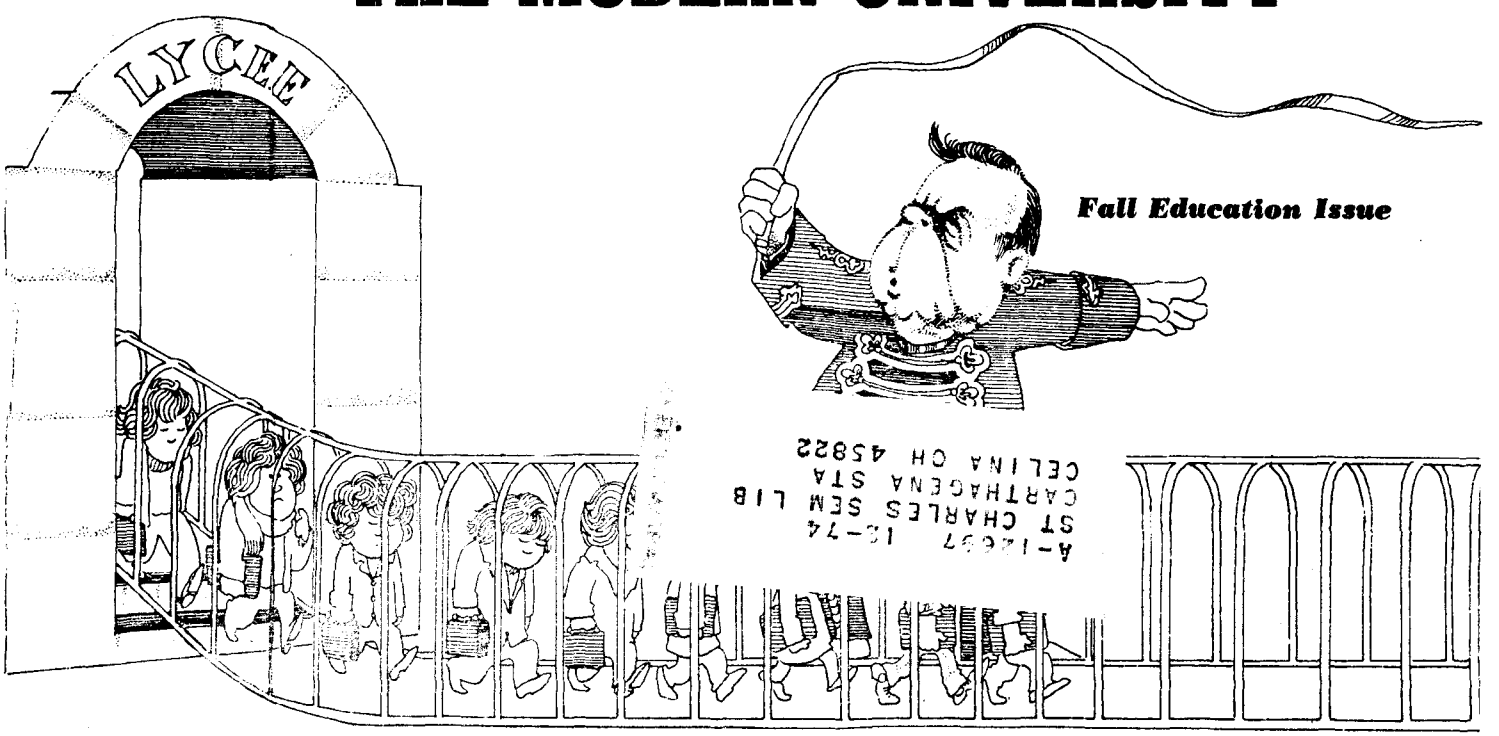
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR. **HEAD GAMES**

PAUL HAZELTON
CHOICE AND THE SCHOOL

MARGARET MULVEHILL CULLEY
SISTERHOOD WAS POWERFUL

BRIAN WICKER
PARENT POWER IN SCHOOLS

DENNIS O'BRIEN
THE MODERN UNIVERSITY



Fall Education Issue

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NEWS & VIEWS

Soaking the Poor

The prices of farm products and processed foods and feeds rose 6.4 percent in July and 7.6 percent in August. Over the 12 months of 1973, home food prices for all consumers leaped by 20 percent. As ever, the poor get hit the hardest.

In fact, in the current food inflation spiral the poor are being doubly clobbered, according to Joseph B. Powell of the Institute for Research on Poverty of the University of Wisconsin.

They pay the "exorbitant" prices for the staples of their diet—and then more. "This double blow happens," Powell notes, "as higher income classes shift from more expensive, higher quality food to lower cost, lower quality foods—in other words, causing the cost of those foods eaten by the poor to increase even more rapidly than the already absurdly high overall rate."

"For instance, items that make up a large portion of the food budgets of the poor —such as potatoes, beans, rice, fish and chicken—have doubled and even tripled in price since 1967. The cheaper the food was initially, generally the greater [has been] the percentage increase in prices. The poorer a person is, and hence the more they must rely on items like potatoes, rice and beans, the worse off they become."

Thus one has the paradox of the food budgets of the poor actually rising faster than those of other groups. In March of 1974, the low-cost food budget cost as determined by the Department of Agriculture was 169.4 percent of the base year 1967, while the moderate-cost plan had risen to only 159.2 and the high-cost plan to only 166.

Economists, as these figures indicate, have some specific data for gauging the impact of food prices on the poor, but nowhere near all they need. Powell, for instance, sees a need for the government to compile regularly a poor-person index that more accurately reflects the prices paid by the poor than does the consumer price index.

Incidentally, how many noticed that the same day that Richard Nixon announced his resignation he vetoed as inflationary an agriculture appropriations bill that had cleared both houses of Congress by two-thirds margins? The legislation exceeded Nixon's budgetary recommendation by $540 million. Much of that amount could be attributed to the rising cost of the food-stamp program.

Charles Owen Rice

They honored Msgr. Charles Owen Rice, Pittsburgh's controversial clergyman, on his 40th anniversary in the priesthood, and if it wasn't his most visible day, it was certainly his most ceremonious.

Msgr. Rice has never been a great one for ceremony. He has always been his best on the unceremonious occasion: in a labor picket line, at a war protest demonstration, or civil rights rally. But he had no other choice Sept. 9; he had to sit still for more ceremony than his 66 years have collectively known.

Cardinal Wright came from Rome, and said of Msgr. Rice: "he can make the dumb talk but cannot make the deaf hear."

Governor Milton Shapp flew out from Harrisburg, and said "if the cause is just, this man will fight for it."

The Wright comment summed up some of the frustration of Rice's career. He has had enormous influence among Pittsburgh's people, but as often as not he was, in editor Russ Gibbons' phrase, as popular a figure as Teddy Kennedy at a Boston anti-busing rally.

"When I broke on the Vietnam war," Msgr. Rice told those attending his luncheon, "my family and friends in the Democratic party, in the clergy, and in labor attacked me." His health went bad because of it. "The poor workers!" Rice exclaimed. "Their kids got killed in Vietnam and they didn't notice the children of the bosses didn't even go."

Labor may have been an erratic lover, but Rice still calls labor the "backbone" of the nation, saying that the unions "do what they are supposed to do better than any other institution."

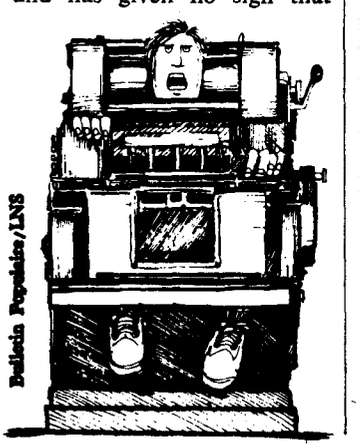
As for the causes spoken of by Governor Shapp, Rice conceded that he doesn't go around looking for them any more. "But I haven't lost my desire to help," he adds.

This is signal that as newspaper columnist, radio commentator and assorted activist, Charles Owen Rice will continue to be Pittsburgh's hairshirt for the indefinite future. Every community needs one.

A Pat for Goodpaster

For the London *Economist*, the most curious note in the curious scenario by which General Alexander Haig was dumped on NATO is that "hardly any mention has been made" of General Andrew Goodpaster, the commander shunted aside.

"By any standards," wrote *The Economist*, Goodpaster is "one of the most distinguished officers the American Army has produced, and one of the best NATO commanders. He is only 59 and has given no sign that he wants to retire yet."



At a time when NATO has serious internal problems (partial withdrawal of Greece; budget problems in every country) and is surrounded by the growing land and naval power of the Warsaw Pact, *The Economist* finds it strange that President Ford should "force out a popular and effective commander in favor of a controversial officer who lacks the most valuable credential of all—command experience."

The *Washington Post* likewise had misgivings over the Haig appointment:

"Why should General Haig receive such a reward any more than Mr. Nixon's verbal hatchet-man, Patrick Buchanan, should have been considered (apparently at General Haig's suggestion) as a candidate for an important ambassadorship? Nothing could be more demoralizing at this point—not just to professional military men or diplomats who would be thus displaced, but also to the public at large—than the spectacle of a mutual protection society among the powerful, of spent men being packed off to comfortable government jobs because anything less would seem to burden them unfairly for their service in Mr. Nixon's cause."

Odds and Ends

—Ms. Shirley Cothran, our Bible-quoting, teetotaler Miss America, offers ethicists, moral theologians, *et al.*, a new norm to consult in the matter of abortion. Ms. Cothran favors it in rape cases, or when "the life of the baby or mother is in danger."

—How would you like to have been Robin Ficker, Democratic candidate for Congress from Maryland's 8th District? In its voters' guide prior to elections, the *Washington Post* listed Ficker's view on unemployment as his view on how to curb inflation. Ficker lost.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Rocky Inflation

Willimantic, Conn.

To the Editors: Your outright endorsement of (Governor) Nelson A. Rockefeller is stupendous indeed, to say the least.

After reading the first three paragraphs of your editorial "The Vice President Designate" [Sept. 6], I was feeling elated to see in print that your weekly had done what other publications have not done—blasted Rockefeller for what he is!

Then the clincher came, paragraph four and I quote: ". . . Rockefeller's unique financial background makes him a valuable resource in the fight against inflation, which is becoming an overriding concern." What you fail to realize is that Rockefeller in his too many years as Governor of New York State never eradicated poverty, Harlem or even saw to it that the poor of New York City and New York State got a fair "deal."

What this all means is that your assessment is wrong when you say Rockefeller will come to the office of Vice President fighting *inflation*. You see, Rockefeller is *inflation*! Your bourgeois concept of *inflation* links it to the wage-worker, which is not so! Why did you not tell the people of the fact that the Consumer Price Index was rising at a rate of less than 2 percent annually prior to 1965. And that it was the war in Vietnam, and a drain on resources that really brought on this *inflation*, it's been that way since.

Nixon and his New Economic Policy (NEP) and now his Ford who calls *inflation* "public enemy no. 1" have not devised a plan to attack at the roots of *inflation*, that is Monopoly Capitalism (i.e., Rockefeller). Rockefeller, big business himself can not/will not do anything against high prices, for that would be to eliminate his higher profits!

Editors, I am sorry to see that you have endorsed a man of no integrity, a

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SEMI-AMNESTY

The President's amnesty program for Vietnam war resisters has at last been spelled out, and the result is typically Ford: longer on promise than on delivery. The program is patently unfair, particularly when contrasted to the unqualified amnesty extended former President Nixon. It is ungenerous—indeed, in the words of *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker, half-hearted and half-punitive. Admittedly, the program is better than no program at all, but that only makes the whole the more disappointing.

President Ford had the opportunity to perform the greatest healing service to the nation since the Lincoln-Andrew Johnson Civil War amnesties. With one stroke of the pen, he could have opened home to tens of thousands living in exile or underground, rescued hundreds languishing in military prisons, salvaged the lives and careers of some 460,000 scarred by less than honorable discharges. Instead, he produced a laborious measure that is as much political as it is humanitarian, and that aggravates old feelings by presumptions about the righteousness of the Vietnam war and delinquency of those who refused to be part of that war. In a way, none of this was surprising. President Ford supported the war from first shot to last; so did most of his closest advisors. One hardly expected therefore any hint that the war might have been illegal or immoral, or admission that the consciences of those who chose not to fight and to kill were ultimately correct. However, one did expect sensitivity and tact. One got what amounted to a lording of moral rectitude. Small wonder that the initial response has been indifferent from those the amnesty is alleged to benefit.

Deficiencies of concept are compounded by faulty mechanics. It is noted, for instance, that the program makes inadequate distinction between military deserters and war resisters, that it lacks due process, that there are insufficient guarantees justice will be evenly dispensed. The problem is that weaknesses of implementation could be adjusted forthwith (and no doubt will to one degree or another), and the program would still be flawed. Guaranteeing that result are emphases, such as on oaths of allegiance and "earned reentry." The former is impolitic, if not unconstitutional; the latter, repugnant. "Earned reentry" to what? To the company of those who foisted an immoral and perhaps unconstitutional war upon

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the nation? To the company of people who could suspend consciences and support that war year upon year? We should not be surprised to discover that witness has its legitimate dimension of pride.

It may be, of course, that the clemency board appointed by Mr. Ford to review the cases of those already convicted or punished will set impressive standards of leniency and generosity, and in the process convey to the program as a whole needed tones of magnanimity. The presence on the board of individuals like former Senator Charles Goodell, an early opponent of the war, and Father Theodore Hesburgh, a proponent of unconditional amnesty, is confirmation that the amnesty program is not one-sidedly staffed, however much it may be one-sidedly conceived. This detail does not redeem the program, but it lends hope that the best will be made out of a less than celebratory set of circumstances.

As expected, voices are being raised for a radical revision of the amnesty program, but it is unlikely that there will be substantive changes in the near future. Mr. Ford seems as stuck with his program as the war resisters themselves. That does not mean, however, that there is not a role for the public to play. It is crucial that the public maintain an interest in the amnesty program and respond to those availing themselves of amnesty with the largeness of spirit withheld by Mr. Ford. The public must reject any suggestion that a guilt is being satisfied. It must see to it that amnesty carries no stigma.

It may be too much to hope that those returning to the open society will be honored for what many of them in fact were: the conscience of the nation in the dark night of the American soul. On the other hand, their consciences can be respected, or at the very minimum extended the benefit of all doubts. Anything short of that is an injustice to the individuals and the crippling of a hope for a healthier American society.

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A TORY PROPOSAL

PARENT POWER IN SCHOOLS

Now that Nixon and Watergate are out of the way, at least temporarily, perhaps we can get back to business as usual in Britain as well as in America. People were beginning to get fed up with the Nixon saga: but the British newspapers quickly buried him, politically speaking, almost over a weekend. Nobody over here is sorry to see him go, though the usual gestures in favor of his foreign policy achievements have been made in many quarters. Whether he ought to have been left to rot by himself now, or whether the various criminal proceedings against him should have been pursued to the bitter end, was a question that most commentators here regarded as a matter for Americans only. Naturally his removal from office is welcomed as a triumph of the "democratic process" (except by professional cynics like Malcolm Muggeridge) but his future as a private citizen is not of much consequence to us. (As an aside, it is perhaps worth remarking that 1974 has so far been a fairly good year as far as toppling rotten governments is concerned: Portugal, Greece and now America. But alas this still leaves plenty of others to be toppled later.)

It looks as though the "democratic process" is going to take its course with us within the next couple of months. A general election is firmly predicted for some date in October. In view of this it is perhaps worth commenting on one particular item of the Conservative Party's election program that has been publicized in the papers in recent days. I choose it because I suspect that it may look, to unsuspecting readers of *Commonweal*, like a genuine piece of democracy: something close to all liberally-minded American hearts. I refer to their plans for what *The Times*—quoting Mr. St. John Stevas, the Conservative spokesman on education—called "parent power" in the schools.

When I was in Michigan for a year, with my family, in 1968-69, one of the things that most impressed us was the enthusiasm with which Americans, and especially American parents, took part in the activities of parents' associations in schools. For example, there was never any difficulty in finding people ready to act as secretary, treasurer or what-have-you, of the local group. The readiness of Americans to take on voluntary jobs of this kind is one of the cultural facts which differentiates American life from British. Over here you have to wheedle, persuade, cajole and arm-twist people into such positions. And naturally, the articulate and the self-confident (which usually means the relatively well-to-do) tend to get chosen to fill them. British class-structures ensure this result with unfailing regularity.

Now it is just this fact which will ensure that the Tory party's slogan of "parent power" will simply serve to maintain the middle-class stranglehold of the educational system. Parents, Mr. Stevas assures us, will be given the right to be governors of schools: and they will be elected from the whole parental body by secret ballot. Teacher-parent associations will possibly be made compulsory. Parents will be given the chance to complain if they can't exercise their full choice over which school to send their child to. All this in the name of "educational democracy" and against the power of officials and pressure groups.

But there are snags. One is the inevitable proviso:

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"unless the cost or the educational needs of pupils" becomes financially unreasonable. In other words, unless education costs too much. But the most obvious point here is that without a radical redistribution of resources —i.e., money—as between the already well-provided and the deprived areas, genuine "democracy" in education is impossible. What is needed in the educational service, as in the health service, is more money, especially in poor areas. But this either means more taxation, or the spending of the money raised by taxing the well-to-do on the deprived. Neither course is likely to appeal to the instincts or interests of the kind of parents who are certain to rise to preeminence in the Tory school system. No body of people is more selfish than the parents' association of a well-provided school. The only people who can break that selfishness are the "officials" —that is, the people who are paid to look at the whole educational system of a given city or county objectively and to recommend action accordingly. Nothing is less likely to bring about a redistribution of resources in favor of those who need it than "parent power."

This is one reason why I think the Conservative educational program is a political swindle: that is to say, a way of giving the illusion of democracy without the substance. But another reason has to do with the question of choice. It is a much advertised part of Conservative "individualism" to emphasize the rights of parents to choose the schools they prefer. But there are several snags when the choice is presented in practice. The first is that as long as there is a selection procedure, allegedly based on intellectual *ability* but in fact based just as much on *attainment* (and of course, *attainment* is much bound up with social class) then the parents of children who do badly in the attainment stakes have much less choice than those of children who succeed. For the successful child's parents, choice is often a reality: for the rest, i.e., the great majority, it is more often a sham. Secondly, it is in fact very difficult indeed to make an intelligent assessment of the merits of various schools in a given area. Schools have a great deal of freedom to "do their own thing," to develop particular courses, to emphasize particular values, etc. These things cannot be objectively set down in a prospectus: they are realities that can only be assessed by experience. You don't know whether a school was right for your child until it is too late. Even the information that is available is liable to be out of date because of staff mobility and other factors.

I have said nothing about the religious question in all this, largely because it does not usually bear much on the situation I've described. For example, the Catholic school system in most places simply mirrors the secular system, at least as far as the relevant factors go. Occasionally one hears of absurd anomalies, like the case of two Catholic parents who could only get their child into the secular school they had preferred, by renouncing their faith. But such cases are very rare. The problem of parents' power and democratic control and indeed of choice, is a political one that affects all areas and all schools. It can't be solved, however, by an electoral gimmick.

BRIAN WICKER

(Brian Wicker is Commonweal's *regular correspondent in Britain.)*

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THE WORLD COUNCIL

FACING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

The Central Committee Meeting of the World Council of Churches (WCC), which recently ended in West Berlin, presented a striking contrast to so many church assemblages where the answers all seem to be to the wrong questions. The WCC faces up to what doubtless is a fact—that humanity is in a state of crisis; that its job is to bring to bear Christian insight and the dynamic of Christian response to God through action, upon that crisis.

To this end it is seeking "to effect a partnership with science and technology," sensitive both to the issues affecting mankind's physical survival, and to opportunities in the crisis for improving the quality of human life in terms of justice, community, and in relation to nature. In this partnership, it conceives of itself as no mere "pan-protestantism" but rather as a movement in the direction of a "new theology" which will contain such concepts as will unify Christianity and provide a rallying point for other world religions to create a "third force " for humanity and especially the poor of the earth.

It envisions as a necessary aspiration in obedience to Christian conscience, power coming into the hands of those who will have "discarded any form of colonialism forever," but will seek to build a "new world economic order," based on closing the gap between undeveloped and developed nations and in which the common people will possess the means of effectively insisting upon social justice and racial and sexual equality.

To Americans quite happy with the system as it is, this could sound like a "Communist plot." At the least it is like what some of those long-haired "alienated"

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young people have been saying—those who could not see the importance of going off to fight Communism in Indochina.

However, the WCC is not committed to any Marxist party line. It gained momentum after World War II, as a search for unity of the churches, a unity which appeared as a logical goal in the new dawning of the realization that this is "One World."

When the churches came together, the younger churches of the developing countries as well as the older churches, all contributed their experiences. They shared how Christian social conscience can best be expressed within their own varying systems—whether socialistic or capitalistic in orientation. But they discovered that in many countries the problem was not so much within their own countries but with exploitation from outside, from interests controlled by the great powers, whose churches were represented in the WCC, and had a history of defending the interests which had exploited them.

In an atmosphere where response to a religiously derived call to seek justice prevailed rather than national advantage, the representatives of the churches in affluent nations listened. They are well aware that they do not represent the rank and file of their membership at this time when they approve what all the churches vote, and that they have a "selling job" to do every time they go home from a meeting.

Since both socialist and free enterprise systems are represented in their membership there is tacit agreement that there must be no arguing in the WCC about which system is intrinsically best. The emphasis is on bringing Christian insights into whichever system one's country has. This is difficult for delegates from Soviet-dominated countries, but they do not feel it is impossible, any more than do the American delegates quail at the prospect of presenting their brand of idealism in the midst of a capitalist economy dominated in many ways by giant corporations. The spirit of the meetings is one of an assumption of coexistence. They feel they have much to offer as to the possibility of a more genuine détente than now exists. This is why they think they can be a "third force" above nationalistic conflict, magnified by the competition of systems, to introduce enough objective ethics, based on religious conviction, to help to avert further exploitation of the weak, or even a third world war.

The meeting voted certain actions. It switched the site of its Fifth World Assembly in 1975 from Jakarta, Indonesia, to Nairobi, Kenya, sensitive to protests of Moslem leaders who represent 85 percent of the population of Indonesia. "The government and the local Christian churches were willing to risk it," Dr. M. M. Thomas, chairman of the WCC Executive Committee said, "but when we go to a country we like to do good for it and for our churches, and that would not happen at Jakarta next year."

It voted to continue its five year mandate-expiring program to combat racism as an integral part of the WCC ongoing program at a cost of $300,000 a year for aid to movements fighting against "racial oppression," with "no strings attached" except that the money "is not to be used for military purposes."

It set up an Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society to provide loans to small industries, handcrafts and farmers in the Third World. With $1 million in hand the Society will be in business as soon as member churches have placed $5 million of their capital funds in it, expected to be in about six months.

It protested jailings of Christian leaders for dissent in South Korea and the Philippines, made plans to introduce the anti-sexist cause into the program of the Fifth Assembly, continued reconstruction aid to Indochina, and voted that administration of holy places in Jerusalem should be decided "within the context of the final political settlement," with due attention paid to the wishes of the people who live there. There were a variety of other resolutions, and endorsements of ongoing programs, carried on by the WCC staff of 300 in its Geneva world headquarters.

Several of the programs reflected growing involvement of the Catholic Church, which, although not a member of the WCC, holds membership in such committees as Sodepax (concerned with Third World development), and the Joint Working Group. "The walls which we thought were eternal between the WCC and the Catholic Church have fallen down," Dr. Lukas Vischer of the WCC Secretariat on Unity declared. Vatican-appointed visitor Msgr. Mueller replied, "We are aware of the disadvantage our non-membership in the WCC presents, but staff members on both sides are coping with that problem by close association. WCC people know their way well now around Rome, and curial staff members, even two cardinals, visit Geneva."

There are now 271 churches in full membership in the WCC. At first the Lutheran and Reform Churches of Western Europe predominated in influence along with American churches. But then the Eastern Orthodox and Russian Orthodox gained in influence and the younger churches of the Third World. There are several large Pentecostal bodies, one of which is the influential Church of Jesus Christ according to the prophet Simon Kimbangu, which numbers 1.5 million members in Zaire. The "Theology of Liberation," the "Theology of Unity in Hope," and "Black Theology" present their claims forcibly. The decisions of the WCC are not made by white Europeans, but are expressions of the whole membershp.

Unlike the United Nations no great power has a right to veto. Perhaps there is no assembly in the world so representative of the aspirations of all people, both men and women.

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Underneath its actions and permeating its discussions the Central Committee was wrestling with the implications of a cluster of reports centering around the report on a five-year "humanum" study conducted under direction of Prof. David Jenkins of Oxford University. The reports, though not without offering hope, were grim. There was a report on "Threats to Survival," containing statistics on the hunger and food crisis, contrasting its severity in undeveloped nations as compared with affluent ones. "It takes five times as much land to support the food consumption of an American as it does to provide what an Asian, African, or Latin American gets to eat" was documented. A still gloomier picture for the Third World was presented when cost in relation to earning power was demonstrated.

The Committee of the Churches on International Affairs quoted a Sixth Special Session of the United Nations plea for "the establishment of a new international economic order based on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence and cooperation among all states irrespective of their economic and social systems, which shall correct inequalities and redress existing injustices, make it possible to eliminate the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries, and ensure steadily accelerating economic and social development in peace and justice for present and future generations." The CCIA took issue only with the reference to "steadily accelerating" suggesting that this was acceptable if it meant continued improvements of the "quality" of human life, but not if it was to be interpreted in crass terms of merely Gross National Product.

"Limits to Growth" theory weaved its way in and out of the discussions, but a spokesman said, "The WCC does not start with that. We do believe, however, that the only alternative to either starvation or totalitarian socialism may be voluntary sharing by willful reduction of their material standard of living on the part of the affluent nations."

The meeting wrestled with that in terms of response to the report of a Conference on Science, Theology and the Future of Man, held in Bucharest in July. The idea was to get outstanding scientists and theologians together to see what would emerge. Some theologians like Paul Verghese of India thought they had let the scientists down. They were not "providing the kind of theology scientists were looking for."

Nevertheless, the conference reported areas of agreement. After pages of statistics on the severity of the world food and energy crisis, which seemed to presage "doom" for one-third of the world's people, the report called for a "new asceticism" on the part of affluent nations as well as scientific world management of resources. It emphasized need to stress the quality of life, justice and new kinds of human settlements to break down a dangerous 50 percent urbanization. Limited economic growth rather than continually expanding GNP was necessary "while not neglecting positive aspects of technological productivity."

The necessary restructuring of the economic distribution "can only be achieved," it said, "if it is based on a *voluntary* withdrawal of people from their dominant and advantageous role in world society. This process will require a concerted, organized strategy rather than coercion, and must be based on worldwide cooperation rather than confrontation." Christian hope in Christ's Kingdom would be "no other-worldly escapism" but a way of "understanding the judgment of God upon much that we have wrongly valued in our technologically powerful societies, and a call to see positively our participation in history and the promise of the new that is to come—a better world for more people and qualitatively closer to the promised Kingdom."

The conference understood the relationship between science and faith "in terms of partnership rather than opposition, since both are fundamentally challenged by the present ecological and social crisis."

One could cite scores of pages more of comment of this sort offered in the meeting, documented with examples and statistics, and received favorably by the membership. A humorous note was introduced by anthropologist Margaret Mead when after a bleak moment which had induced Dr. Potter to call the meeting to prayer, she commented, "It would be impossible to convince the affluent to give up 'the good life' were it not for the fact that the good life isn't so good. It brings only ulcers, mental breakups and heart attacks."

No doubt delegates from Soviet countries were delighted to hear people from the Free World singing the praises of austerity, an old tune to their ears, but this reporter did not conclude that the line was a sour grapes cop-out from competition with socialism, so much as it was a genuine expression of sensitivity to the illusionary nature of some of our values, the song we have heard our own young people sing, with perhaps more prophetic instinct than they knew. One caught the unanimity of the Committee that it was time to heed. The thought occurred, "If the young people knew that high placed representatives of the so called 'establishment churches' were now thinking in this way, some of them might come back to the churches."

What is the present theological rationale supporting the actions of the WCC? "Men are concerned not with who they are but with whether they can survive," Prof. Jenkins' report began. "In the struggle for survival as human beings, insights arise which can point to possibilities of meaning, fulfillment and even glory. But the question of 'What is man?' if it is posed at all in the struggle is a cry first of anguish. The context of any Christian study of man is those cries of anguish in which men and women suffer at the hands of their fellow men and women."

In identifying with the cries of anguish can come

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repentance. And only in repentance can the unity of Christ be found. Only the repentance of the church can give it the power to act in unity and inspire the affluent to share. Thus, the process by which God can save his people and his world begins with Christians really hearing those cries of anguish. The WCC plans to institute educational programs in all the member churches to teach its people to listen, and hear. JOHN KNOBLE

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WASHINGTON REPORT

POST-WATERGATE RECONSTRUCTION—II

From the beginning, the Congress never really has pulled itself together. The first Senate met nine times in the late winter of 1789 before it achieved a quorum. The first House of Representatives, 25 times.

Seldom has the Congress evidenced a sense of self as an institution, unlike the Presidency. The House has increased from its original 65 members to 435 today; the Senate, from 26 to 100. Today, as yesteryear, the Congress, in legislative and administrative ways, behaves as if it consisted of 535 mom-and-pop grocery stores. Each tries to beg, borrow and barter the best for itself. Woodrow Wilson, as a Congressional scholar, phrased it more elegantly when he noted that the Congress consists of ambassadors from different lands coming together to exchange favors.

For an assemblage of undeniably bright and, mostly, well-intentioned men (519) and women (16), there is a lack of intellectual curiosity not only about the legislation which they declaim about and vote on, but also an astounding lack of interest in the historical foundations and evolution of the Congress itself, in which the delegates to the Constitutional Convention placed so much faith and hope.

The two bodies of the Congress have not been without their individual and collective achievements. But, generally, these achievements have come as a result of being pushed and plodded by exterior events and by Presidents who knew what they wanted. At times, in the federal system of shared powers, Presidents have grabbed not only the bed-clothes, but also usurped the bed itself.

The history of the House may be read in the biographies of its great presiding officers, its Speakers—Clay, who dominated President Monroe; Reed, who ran a tight ship in the 1890s; Cannon, albeit with a negatively charged vision; and, occasionally, Rayburn. But since Rayburn returned to his native Texas to die in 1961, there's been no effective Speaker. Not that the House is without members who would be effective Speakers—Anderson of Illinois, Bolling of Missouri and Udall of Arizona, among others.

The history of the Senate reads differently. It falls behind the House in an ability to generate "meat-and-potatoes" legislation. It is more "show-than-go," although it receives more press coverage than the House. The Senate has had fewer titans than the House, particularly in recent years when its personal and committee staffs play such a vital role. There is greater procedural latitude for discussion simply because it has fewer members.

However, the great issues, domestic or foreign—successfully or unsuccessfully resolved—have also been refracted through the prism of great personalities, among them, Webster, Calhoun, La Follette and Borah. But the courageous, plain-speaking men of the Senate, be they Tories or Populists, become fewer and fewer. In our times, the candidates who defeated Douglas of Illinois, Gruening of Alaska and Morse of Oregon have illustrated no great causes—and show no signs of ever doing so. Bland men looking for bland solutions. Yes, contests take place, But reliable spokesmen at the cutting-edge of issues no longer sit in the Senate. Conflicts are arranged beforehand by consensus and sleight-of-hand. Consensus politics does not address itself to epic problems afflicting us in recent years: economic depression and exclusion of non-whites from American life and military commitments in Southeast Asia. One is reminded, as one or another bill is put together in the Senate cloakrooms, of the definition of a camel as a horse assembled by a committee. Viewing the process is like being at an ITT board of director's meeting.

The Congress, on some issues, is almost the last institution to respond—even the last to understand what this issue is about, as in the case of civil rights and the Vietnam war. On economic problems, the Congress' white male middle-class orientation is even more noticeable. The percentage of inflation is running at two digits; wholesale prices rose 3.9 percent in August, the largest one-month increase in 25 years; housing "starts" haven't been lower since World War II. Yet as long as white unemployment remains at about 3 percent or less for male white-collars, the Congress isn't going to respond effectively and energetically to a jobless rate of 6 percent nationally—and double that, or worse, for non-whites. If the white-collars begin breathing their hot breath on the collective neck of the Congress as in

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the 1930s depression, then the legislators will legislate. Meanwhile, it confines itself to a handout for the lower orders of so-called "public-service" jobs—honorific misnomer for makeshift, featherbedding employment that leaves neither the employing agency satisfied nor the employe with any pride.

One long-standing hope has been that Congressional reform would materially alter this unresponsiveness. Actually, "Congressional reform" is a portmanteau word, meaning it lacks definition. Congressional reform may be said to signify three areas: (1) reform of Congressional operations, such as the committee system or seniority; (2) reform of the Congressional political parties, such as the operation of their respective caucuses; and (3) campaign-financing reform of Congressional primary and general elections—limitations on contributions an dexpenditures, for example. For many years, there's been a huge volume of literature about reform of the Congress. Occassionally, Congress has responded after prodding. The 1946 LaFollette-Monroney Act, although much praised, did little more than establish a pension system to lure time-servers out of the Congress. The 1971 Legislative Reorganization Act represented, among other things, a useful effort to provide an effective information-data service for the Congress. A measure of campaign-financing reform has recently been enacted; public financing of Presidential elections may become law this year.

In the populous House, more so than in the Senate, detailed procedures exist that establish pathways for legislation and shape it along the way. House members, such as Rep. Bolling of Missouri, have made careers out of trying to make these pathways fairer and more open to public view. But it is now becoming clear that, even if Bolling's reforms of long standing are put into effect, there are few bold, competent leaders available to make the most of any reorganization. And, in recent months it has become apparent that some House Democrats, hitherto regarded as "reformers," were, in fact, only in the battle until they were admitted to the precincts of power. The pending Bolling reforms are being now opposed by Reps. Philip Burton of California, Thompson of New Jersey and O'Hara of Michigan, who have gained a chairmanship or some other power slot. Now that they've a piece of the action, they're not about to let go any more than did the Southern reactionaries who dominated the House committees into the 1960s. They have attempted to convert the issue of House reform into something along the lines of a Brooklyn clubhouse brawl over patronage.

The issue of internal reform in the Senate has attracted little interest. There are no counterparts to the Bollings of the House. In practical terms, it's easier in the Senate to by-pass the tight grip of a committee chairman and bring a neglected issue to attention in the Senate chamber. Further, many Senators are busy running for President; others simply want to hustle their way into the power structure; most feel that, as Congressional reformers, they would be impeded (i.e., punished) in achieving their legislative objectives by party leaders who feel that procedural reforms are directed at them personally. Moreover, unlike in the House, few staff members are interested in such reforms.

Moreover, in recent months, a note of reappraisal has been struck among some veteran Congressional reformers. They are taking a second-look at their own proposals. They still agree that procedure affects substance. Of course, fairer committee procedures and committee-assignment systems are needed. But they are beginning to place a lesser emphasis on these. Procedural reform, that Congressional dose-of-salts, is not primarily the remedy, they are now suggesting tentatively to each other. By means of honest elections, a measure of public financing, fair and open voter registration statutes and more issue-oriented campaigns by better-calibre candidates; these, they say, will do more to improve the Congress than all the internal reforms put together. To a degree, flagrant abuses of entrenched Congressional power have been mitigated simply by electoral defeats and enforced retirements. One of four Senators has been elected since 1970 and more than one-half of the 100 Senators within the last 10 years. In the 435-member House, the proportion of newcomers is even higher than in the Senate. The effect, in terms of procedural reforms, is favorable because newcomers have fewer old-school ties to the past and more ties to the future. Seniority, manifest in its most destructive form in the House, has consequently been somewhat allieviated.

Nor, as many reformers realize in reevaluating their earlier efforts, does the Congess need to match in numbers both the staffing and computers marshaled so formidably by the Defense, Health-Education-and-Welfare and other departments of the Executive Branch. Congress has recently established Senate and House budget committees, backed by a Congressional budget office, in hopes of matching the budget-makers of the President. If these two new committees avoid a staffing hassle now developing, there is a decent chance that the Congressional David can match Goliath, the Executive. Larger staffing and more computers won't do the chore, however, without the will on the part of members of Congress both to monitor more effectively Presidential departments and regain the loss of appropriation power. Many members of Congress still want to play handsies with Presidents; others turn away from their overall Congressional responsibilities; others, such as Senator McGee of Wyoming, advance the argument that, in the field of foreign affairs for example, the President should be the primary instigator and executor of foreign policy. Others, particularly House members, believe they're elected to get what they can for themselves and their constituents, but that, overall, the reign-

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ing President is, and should be the "Big Daddy" of us all.

Of course, the Congressional machinery does need alteration. But it may not need the detailed overhaul that some reformers hitherto have suggested. More useful to breaking the influence that economic interests have on some legislative committees would be to alter the procedures for referral and management of individual pieces of legislation. One proposal is to return to a procedure of the early years when major legislation was discussed first by the full House or Senate before referral to a committee. This would enable the full House or Senate to be the master, not as now the servant, of its legislative committees (Congress in session is Congress on display, Wilson wrote, while Congress in committee is Congress at work). Moreover, in the past, bills, those disapproved as well as approved within committees, were reported to the full House or Senate. This would further enable each body to master its committees. Even more fundamental, but probably unacceptable to members of Congress whatever their political orientation, would be to alter interest-ridden legislative committees. This could be done by identifying the legislative committees of the Senate by number (1, 2, 3, etc.); for example, instead of by name (Agriculture, Finance, Foreign Relations, Interior, etc.). Bills as introduced would be referred sequentially to these numbered committees. Committee No. 1 would perhaps in the course of a Congressional session be assigned an environmental bill, a trade bill, a foreign-affairs bill and a health-services bill. Such a procedure would raise hob with the "big interests," not only of business but of labor. It would unhinge the tax-writing committees of the House and Senate, which are friendly to corporations, but also the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee and the House Education and Labor Committee, which are correspondingly "stacked" with members favoring orthodox liberal-labor points-of-view. Conceivably, the two appropriations committees could be exempted from such a procedure.

One does not have to be a Jeremiah to be alarmed about the decline of Congress. In truth, it never has achieved the political counterpart of running the mile in under four minutes. It never will. But it has done its institutional duty from time-to-time. The Watergate scandals show that the Congress could be permanently maimed beyond rehabilitation. Yet there seems to be no general awareness of this in either body of Congress.

Seldom discussed is an alternative direction—the legislative branch should give more emphasis to "oversight" of Presidential departments. This would occur at the cost of continuing to permit these departments to maintain their legislative initiative, a state-of-affairs that members of Congress would have rejected 50 years ago. At that time, one committee chairman returned a draft bill submitted by the Interior Department with the observation that his committee needed no help from the Executive in doing what the Constitution assigned the Congress to do—legislate. In these times, committee chairmen have been publicly quoted as saying their committee couldn't act until they received such-and-such a draft bill from the White House. Were it institutionally fit, the Congress, as overseer, could insist to President Ford, following his act of pardon to Nixon, that it is one thing to temper justice with mercy, but it is quite another to tamper with justice—and force Ford to back-off.

Neither the French National Assembly nor the late President Pompidou is a political guide to follow, France being such a wretched political state, but an observation of his does point to a dilemma of Congress. In an advanced industrial State, is the elected national legislature finding it too difficult to carry out its primary role assigned it by the Constitution? Private sectors are more powerful and more knowledgeable, though not necessarily wiser. The executive sector of public government is more agile, although not necessarily wiser, at directing the public's business. Congress has demonstrated its willingness to be pistol-whipped by Presidents since FDR.

Perhaps, the Congress can get itself together and at least effectively perform supervisory or oversight functions, even if it can't legislate effectively and promptly. Oversight is a function that Congress and its committees have generally neglected. The disgruntled civil servant, columnist Jack Anderson and the *Washington Post* are the customary sources of news of transgressions by Presidential departments. Congress does damn little investigating on its own—at least, of substantive matters. Until recently, the General Accounting Office (GAO), the investigatory arm of the Congress, confined its activities to reports of such momentous scandals as the ordering of too many paperclips by this agency or that bureau.

There are three sectors that need attention:

1—The drive of Presidents to increase their powers at the expense of Congress. An alert Congress would have exposed the Nixon Administration's efforts to alter the federal system.

2—Individual liberties—and their erosion by the demands of government and corporations.

3—The excesses of technology which uproot man and force him into artificial environments.

Forty years ago, the House met to discuss its operations. The discussion lasted nearly one week. The Senate and House could only benefit by scheduling such a discussion during the lackadaisical days of the new Congress which will convene next January.

Congress should halt its slide; not that it has much farther to go. Presidents and exterior events continue to push it toward the farthest margins of our national political life.

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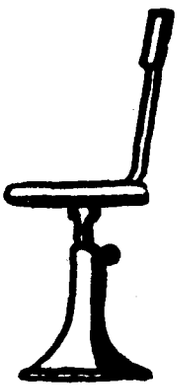
CHOICE AND THE SCHOOL

PAUL HAZELTON



Taking what Justice Thurgood Marshall called 'a giant step backward'

Among the many political events of this summer, one which occurred at the height of the Presidential crisis will surely be more than a historical footnote. The day after the Supreme Court ordered the release of the Presidential tapes, it reversed the findings of lower courts which would have resulted in the desegregation of the schools of Detroit and its suburbs. The event reflects the strong imprint of the Nixon years, a relatively short period in the continuities of judicial opinion.

With that event, school desegregation appears to have reached the end of its present momentum. The Detroit case, *Bradley vs. Milliken*, seems almost an ironic commemoration of the 20th anniversary of *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education*. That decision of the Warren court had become a symbol of the social forces of which it was a part and which have occupied so much of our political and judicial attention in the intervening years.

In a single week, the last of July, the Supreme Court not only took what Thurgood Marshall called "a giant step backward" from *Brown* but the House passed, 323-83, an education bill limiting busing to no farther than "the next nearest school." A similar vote had passed the Senate earlier and Congressional liberals felt lucky to have eliminated from the bill's final version the reopening of all existing court-ordered busing plans.

At the national level—which is not to say the local level such as Boston where a bitterly resisted court ordered busing scheme is taking effect this fall—large scale desegregation with busing is a logic and a strategy which appears to have served its time. If this is so, it will not be because it has been successful; nor simply because of white resistance. It is a solution which has lost the interest of many blacks who have come to maturity and to positions of influence since 1954.

This summer when Coleman Young, Detroit's first black mayor, learned of the Court decision which rejected the busing plan involving children from nearly a 2,000 square mile area around his city, he said, "I shed no big tears for cross district busing." A growing number of blacks are less indifferent to busing. They oppose it. They see the whole attempt to desegregate Northern schools as simply another white assumption of the inferiority of black children. Like Mayor Young they have become more interested in reforming school finance and getting money to the children who need it most.

If a new kind of logic is evolving for remedying urban education, especially in the North, much of it has been foreshadowed in recent school cases before the Burger court. The emerging issues are less ones of integration and more ones concerned with questions of authority and choice. They deal with the relative powers of state and local governments in education. They are also, though less evidently, about the options available to parents in a mixed system of public and private schools.

Essentially two other kinds of school issues besides desegregation have been before the Burger court in its six years. The first were a series of cases concerned with public aid to private schools, the most significant being *Lemon* in 1972. In that case the Court found unconstitutional the Pennsylvania law subsidizing secular instruction and services in church schools. A number of states were in the process of passing such aid; and the decisions of the Court plunged private education,

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especially Catholic schools, deeper into their present financial crisis.

The second kind of school case has been concerned with inter-district inequalities in public systems. In these the notable decisions are *Rodriguez* and the Detroit case this summer. In the latter, the emotionally charged busing issue tended to obscure the central concern of the Court. It was the exercise of the state government's authority in public education, a concern assigned to it by the 10th Amendment and for which the state must guarantee the equal protection of its laws under the 14th.

In both *Bradley* and *Rodriguez* it was argued that the states failed to establish a sufficient degree of equality among the school districts of the state. Because in both cases the same members of the Court divided 5-4, it is helpful to consider them together.

Two Cases

Rodriguez originated in a poor, Chicano district in San Antonio. It was contended in it that the common method of financing schools in this country is unfair because it makes the money available for a child's education largely dependent on the value of real estate in the community in which his parents live.

The main source of money for public schools comes from the relation of the number of students, to the value of local real estate, to the other burdens on local government such as safety, welfare, and health. Invariably this combination of factors favors the wealthiest middle-class districts; and usually they are also favored with a disproportionate share of additional state support by complicated state aid formulae. In Texas, at the time of *Rodriguez* the ratio of richest to poorest community based on property values was 45-1. In California, it was 25-1; in Michigan 30-1; and in New York 84-1.

The argument in *Rodriguez* was extended this summer in *Bradley*. In this instance it was not a question of financing, the plaintiffs argued, but of segregation. Essentially, the case sought to have the *de jure* standards of *Brown* applied to the *de facto* segregation of the urban North. The Federal District Court, upheld by the Court of Appeals, agreed and said that there were *de jure* conditions. The existing organization of schools had "the natural and probable effect of continuing racially segregated schools by local board and state governmental actions."

The lower courts had ordered the city and fifty-three surrounding suburban school districts in a three-county area to combine for a desegregated solution. It was not asserted in the lower courts that the suburban districts themselves were practicing segregation. Such evidence, it had been argued, was not necessary since the school district boundaries were simply administrative conveniences of the state which had primary responsibility for public education.

Writing the majority opinion which overturned the lower courts, Chief Justice Burger held that specific evidence of racial discrimination in suburban schools was indeed necessary. In its absence there was no justification for introducing a remedy which he said, "would disrupt and alter the structure of public education in Michigan." Only where it could be shown that two districts were discriminating, he said, would the Court order busing between them.

The Chief Justice stressed in his opinion the deeply rooted tradition of local control in public education. On this point, he cited Justice Powell for the majority in *Rodriguez*, and he returned the Detroit case to the lower court "for the prompt formulation of a remedy which has been delayed since 1971."

That remedy, Justice Marshall reminded the Court in a caustic, at times bitter, dissent had been precisely the one the lower courts had found impossible in Detroit, where two out of three public school students are black. Marshall accepted the logic of the lower court decision that the school district lines were due to state action; and he added, "having created a system where whites and Negroes were intentionally kept apart so that they could not become accustomed to learning together, the state is responsible for the fact that many whites will react to the dismantling of the segregated system [in Detroit] by attempting to flee to the suburbs."

There is no evidence in the recent history of urban schools to refute this. Had the lower court been upheld and had white suburban students been bused, it is likely that there would have been some further flight to beyond the tri-county suburbs. Almost certainly private school enrollments would have risen sharply. But just as the growth of white segregation academies in the deep South has not substantially held back the movement toward integration there; so it might be expected that the white suburbs of Detroit, and the rest of the urban North, however resistantly, would have been set on the slow, hard road toward the goal envisioned in *Brown* in 1954.

In his dissent this summer, Justice Marshall sounded again the idealism that shaped that goal. As the NAACP counsel, he had argued that case himself before the Court. Now in *Bradley* he stated that argument once again: "We deal here with the rights of all children, whatever their race, to an equal start in life and to an equal opportunity to reach their full potential as citizens. Unless children begin to learn together, there is little hope that our people will live together."

Yet after twenty years we are obliged to consider other routes to that destination. Black indifference and opposition to busing are more significant than white hostility to it. But during these years many have begun to get some sense of the real differential costs and the

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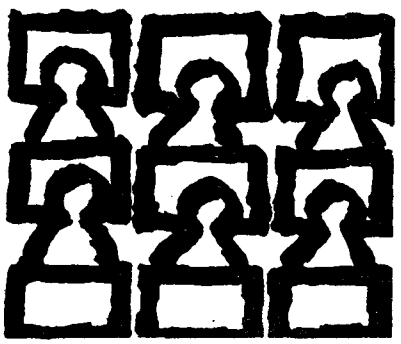
lack of choices not only to blacks, but to those in the lower middle- and working-class white suburbs who charge—with the evidence of twenty years supporting their arguments—that their lives will be most disrupted while the wealthier, outer suburbs remain almost unaffected.

Embedded as it has been in the busing issue, the Detroit case has obscured other aspects of the metropolitan district solution. Some of these bear directly on the kind of financial reform envisioned by Mayor Young. Nor need metropolitan solutions be antithetical, as some fear, to the direction of another reform in urban education—decentralization and community control. The need in government of schools everywhere is neither for upward nor for downward movement by itself. But for simultaneous movement. Some things are best located in the individual classroom, and in the schools, and their neighborhoods. Others need to be lifted to some intermediate point between the local district and the state.

Busing aside, a metropolitan district formed in Detroit and its suburbs would be a major step toward the fair use of the large public resources of that area which are generated by the city itself. Only the tax base of



the whole area can support the planning, the administrative reorganization, the special services for students that are required for more than the city schools alone. Such reforms need not limit the movement toward the deeper needs of citizen participation, of connecting schools to their neighborhoods, and of strengthening the commitment to diversity in them.

In general the history of school district reorganization in this country has resulted in greater fairness as well as effectiveness. Intra-district inequalities persist, but they are usually markedly less than before reorganization. Reducing them remains on the whole simpler within a district than within the up-state/down-state politics of state legislatures.

The Detroit case turns, not on busing, but on the question of the state's power and responsibility in designing the local school districts. Justice White declared in a separate dissent that Michigan "has successfully insulated itself from its duty to provide effective desegregation remedies by vesting sufficient power over its public schools in its local school districts." But this in no way diminishes the responsibility of the state. It remains the governmental entity to which the 14th Amendment guarantees are directed.

The majority opinion shifts the point of view. It declares that "the notion that school district lines can be casually ignored" damages a deep-rooted tradition of local control. Autonomy at that level, the Chief Justice writes, "has long been thought essential both to maintenance of community concern and support . . . and to quality of the educational process." It is in this connection that he cites Justice Powell's opinion in *Rodriguez* with its emphasis on the need for local control in order to fit local programs to local needs, and to provide for "experimentation, innovation, and a healthy competition for educational excellence."

The deficiency of this view may seem most striking to those who are closest to urban schools. Nor does it square with more than a decade of academic studies of school government. These commonly describe such views today as the conventional wisdom or pious fictions which have their uses but which scarcely correspond to the reality of the bureaucratic, professional and other interests contending at every level for control in education.

Justice Marshall rejected the majority's "interposition" argument of local district and state authority. He found, as in *Rodriguez*, the existing district lines in Michigan "both flexible and permeable" when the state chooses to consider them so. In the Texas case last year, he catalogued some of the restrictions imposed by that state on local boards. These included required curricula, state central purchasing of textbooks, the qualifications of teachers and many details like regulation of the length of the school day. All these made a "sham" of the state's advocacy of local control in that case.

In his *Rodriguez* opinion, Marshall was carefully explicit about his belief that there was indeed a very substantial public interest in the local control of schools. He recalled an earlier decision in which the Court said, "direct control over decisions vitally affecting the education of one's children is a need strongly felt in our society." But in the Texas case he concluded that the need was not being met by a purported concern for local control which was "an excuse rather than a justification for interdistrict inequality."

After this summer, it is evident that the prevailing majority view of the Court with its consequences for financing as well as for school district organization sustains inevitably a dual system of public education in this country. In the favored reaches of the suburbs there is—*de facto*, if you will—a system of private schools. For those who can afford them, they offer substantial choices. The cost of tuition for them is the price of residence in those communities and their relatively tolerable real estate taxes.

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The idea of choice has become a major element in much recent discussion of educational policy. It has been especially important in the voucher plans of urban school critics like Christopher Jencks. The use of vouchers, he has argued, regulated by income and minority group standards, can give urban parents and their children some equalizing power to choose alternatives to the monolithic schools of the city—which Jencks once observed are about as responsive as the United States post office to the needs of its ordinary users; and to the use of which, they have about as much choice.

Though largely unrelated to urban education, the "free school" movement has also emphasized the importance of "choice" in education, and the need everywhere for providing alternatives to existing public schools. Vouchers for free schools would give them some financial base, which they almost universally lack, and release them as well from their near total bondage at present to the upper-middle-class parents.

Vouchers

About the voucher idea there has been a persistent irony for liberal reformers. It lies in their kinship to the economist Milton Friedman and his followers who are committed to a marketplace economy for all social programs. Early in the Nixon Administration the OEO supported a Jencks voucher plan limited to the public schools in a mixed urban district in California. More recently, with a certain ideological evenhandedness, a voucher plan was approved for the whole state of New Hampshire. Church schools, which account for about 80 percent of the total private school enrollment in the state, are excluded by the *Lemon* decision, but there are other private schools; and currently the state has an unmistakably congenial, conservative political climate.

"Choice" as an educational principle would surely have been raised to new levels of concern in the Detroit suburbs if the recent court decision had gone the other way. It is, as many English politicians have found, a slogan of great potency.

In England, a concept of parental choice is embodied in the 1944 Education Act which has governed the organization of English schools for a generation. It was a politically necessary assurance to the influential, variously grant-aided private and county grammar schools which still control access to the university and to all the important educational credentials in that country. The guarantee of parental choice continues to frustrate the development of comprehensive secondary schools, the Labor party alternative to the present system. Thus it helps perpetuate the unmistakably inferior modern schools which serve the 70 percent or more students who fail to enter the selective grammar schools.

The new conservative party spokesman on education, Mr. Norman St. John-Stevas, who abruptly replaced another Tory judged to have been "soft on comprehensives," devoted his first speech to his party's commitment to parental choice in the state system. It is a hard political line and one that has not been much cracked by the Socialist rejoinder of over a generation that it ignores the absence of any choice for the overwhelming numbers who don't make it in the system. [See Brian Wicker, page 4.]

In an American system that is far more ambiguous than England's, the present need is to illuminate and to generate some accurate thinking about what we have in the past called simply the public and private sectors. "Private" may not be the right word for suburban schools. Milton Himmelfarb once called them "the not-so-public schools." That may be more useful. In any case, twenty years after *Brown* we are beginning to understand that our ideas of desegregation are inseparable from other questions of privilege in education.

In some form they have been a major concern in each session of the Burger court. The best case for illuminating the questions, if not the answers, is one the Court heard in 1972, the year between *Lemon* and *Rodriguez*. In *Yoder* the Court upheld the right of some Amish parents to keep their children out of the schools for the last two years of compulsory education required by the laws of Wisconsin. The parents argued the damage to their religious beliefs and their culture was greater than the advantage to the state of the continued schooling of their children, which would have required busing out of the Amish community.

The majority and minority opinions of the Court are equally interesting. They range over questions of choice not only for parents but, in Douglas' forceful dissent, for the students as well. Justice White connects the case to *Pierce* in 1925, which established the modern rights of private education. In his concurring majority opinion he probes sensitively not only questions of parental rights but the state's need for compulsory education as well.

The questions remain open. They press more urgently as the traditional private sector becomes smaller and undeniably of less significance. In public education, meanwhile, the fault line of social, economic and racial privilege emerges unmistakably. The larger questions revealed are those which ask how shall educational opportunity in this society be provided. And on what terms?

The balance to be struck between choice and need in organizing our schools, it becomes more evident each year, extends toward the largest questions of equality and personal liberty in our society. Measured in one direction, July's decision may have been the "giant step backward" that Thurgood Marshall declared it to be. But the force of the *Brown* decision carries in other directions as well. There can be little doubt that the Court must return to the issues which rise from them.

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SISTERHOOD WAS POWERFUL

MARGARET MULVEHILL CULLEY

The overwhelming majority of women who are college presidents are also nuns

When Elizabeth McCormack stepped down as President of Manhattanville College this August to be replaced by Harold Delaney, the number of women college presidents in this country was reduced to ninety-five. *The 1973 World Almanac* lists 1500 persons who are presidents of four-year colleges in the United States and of the ninety-five who are women eighty-four are nuns. At least two more, including Jacqueline Grennan Wexler of Hunter, are ex-nuns. Of the women college presidents who are not nuns or ex-nuns four are at private women's colleges—Barnard, Cedar Crest, Radcliffe and Wellesley; two are at teachers' colleges, one at a business college, one at a music institute. The only woman in the country not a nun or an ex-nun who is the president of a college where men are students and which is not primarily a vocational institution is Gail Thane Parker of Bennington. Bennington, of course, has been until recent years a woman's college.

The very few women who do hold positions of highest leadership in our colleges are almost entirely at institutions which the culture devalues: women's colleges, church-related colleges and vocational schools. And with the exception of Hunter, all the colleges headed by women are small: most with enrollments of under 2,000. The culture's reluctance to place women in positions of "real" power and influence is compounded by the apparent impossibility of placing women in positions of authority over men. Thus while sixty men are presidents of women's colleges, no woman is the president of a men's college.

That the overwhelming majority of women who are college presidents are also nuns is an important sociological fact. Here we have a crucial footnote to the popular image of Sr. Margaret Mary under the thumb of the monsignor at the parochial parish school. The Sisterhood has been one route for women to the positions of leadership in institutions of higher education in this country, positions otherwise largely closed to women. The same point might be made for health-care institutions in America.

What was true in the Middle Ages apparently has remained true for some in the twentieth century. In the words of Emily James Putnam: "We think today of the cloister as a refuge from the distracting liberty of secular life; it seems paradoxical and yet is apparently true that the women of early Christendom fled from the constraint of the home to the expansion of the cloister." Some of these women such as Abbess Hilda, who presided over a monastery for religious of both sexes, were not only influential figures in their own estblishments but also significant figures of state. Putnam's observation that "the impulse toward leadership which kept the men in the world sent the women out of it" could be confirmed by any graduate of a Catholic women's college in this century. Young women who held leadership positions as undergraduates in these institutions regularly entered the convent upon graduation. A class president might well return to her *alma mater* after ten years, if not as its President perhaps as its Dean of Students. The reality, perhaps only obscurely sensed by these gifted undergraduate women, was that within the religious life was one place where a woman might live out a life-long commitment to a profession. And the Catholic college was one of the few institutions where women could win positions of the highest responsibility and influence.

The other place where women have figured prominently in higher education in America is in the handful of prestigious private women's colleges. Mary Lyon began the century and a half struggle to obtain quality higher education for women when she opened the doors of Mount Holyoke in 1837. The great college presidents such as Alice Freeman Palmer of Wellesley and Martha Carey Thomas of Bryn Mawr were products of the days when women on college faculties were at an all-time high—something less than forty percent in 1879. At the turn of the century, Martha Carey Thomas remarked at the inauguration ceremony of the first Dean of Pembroke College: "If we seek for the cause of misunderstanding of the conditions of girls' education, we shall find it in that educated women are not yet in control of women's education in either schools or colleges. It is difficult for men to look at women independently of the relation of wives and sweethearts, and this view unconsciously keeps them from treating the educational standards of women with sufficient seriousness." Opinio has always remained divided upon this issue at our best-known, private women's colleges: Wellesley Col-

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lege has had only women presidents since its founding in 1875 while Smith College, endowed by Sophia Smith in the same year, has recently announced the appointment of its first woman president, Jill K. Conway of the University of Toronto, whose term will begin in July, 1975.

Ironically, it was under the guise of improving standards of education for women that colleges began to deny, and continue to deny, positions of leadership to women. Even Wellesley College which was founded with the intention of hiring only women administrators and faculty and which had over ninety percent of its faculty women in 1940 had only sixty-two percent women in 1960. A Smith College handbook documents the widespread assumption of the sixties—that the excellence of an educational institution was evidenced by the number of men it could boast on its faculty. Coaching alumnae in effective recruiting of new students for Smith, the handbook reads:

> Points to Stress about Smith (italics mine)
>
> Superior faculty. Chosen for their scholarship, but primarily because they are first-rate teachers; no graduate students teaching; full professors teach many freshman courses; *over half of the faculty are men*; one-ten faculty student ratio; fifty percent of

> the classes have fewer than twenty students; close and friendly relations between faculty and students.

When questioned about the intent of such a statement at a Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination hearing in 1973 a witness from Smith said: "This is what the students think, this is what their mothers think; we therefore put this in because we are trying to advertise the superiority of the faculty." Gloria Steinem, quoted in the Smith College student paper in April of 1974, recalls her days as an undergraduate at Smith and confirms this statement about mothers and their daughters. She "does not recall that students ever thought it was unusual to have a male president at a female college" and as for the high percentage of men on the faculty—"It was viewed as a positive advantage of the college."

Such attitudes were by no means unique to Smith College as is evidenced in the nationwide decline in the percentage of women on college faculties between the years 1940 and 1960. In 1939 nearly thirty percent of college and university faculties were women but ten years ago only nineteen percent were women. Affirmative action efforts of the last few years have increased that figure by less than 2 percent. The number of women college presidents has followed the same pattern—in the 1950's there were twenty percent more women college presidents than there are today. A report called *The Status of Women at the City University of New York* presented to the Chancellor at CUNY in 1972 states:

> In the fall of 1971, women were only two of 20 (10 percent) college presidents [One of these retired in June of 1972 and was replaced by an acting president who is a man]. In fact, of the 49 different persons who have served as presidents of CUNY colleges since 1939, only five (12.5 percent) have been women . . . three of those have served at Hunter College, a liberal arts school for women which became coeducational in 1961. Two of the five women served only as acting president; a third woman served twice as acting president at Hunter College before becoming the first woman to be appointed president of a CUNY college. [The person served less than a year before retiring.] No woman president in the CUNY system has yet served a term of office in excess of three years. There has never been a woman college vice president or provost in the history of CUNY.

Already undermined by the conviction that having men in positions of leadership equals educational prestige, the precarious situation of women in higher education became even more so in the face of the hard financial facts of the last decade. The colleges where women were in leadership roles—the small colleges and the women's colleges—began to close or to become coeducational in order to survive. Between 1960 and 1972 152 of the nation's 298 women's colleges closed or became coed. When a woman's college becomes coed, it is likely tha twomen administrators will be replaced by men even though a small fraction of the student population is male. Patterns among the undergraduate population, at leaast at the initial stages of coeducation are apt to be similar; male undergraduates assume leadership positions such as student body president or editor of the newspaper in excess of their numbers.

Colleges facing financial difficulties seek leadership with "business sense"; what this means is that they bring men to positions which might have been held by women. For men have access to the money; Virginia Woolf knew that when she contemplated the state of women's education in *A Room of One's Own*: "What had our mothers been doing then that they had no wealth to leave us?" The détente between big business and higher education, in addition to raising awesome threats to academic freedom, does not bode well for women. When educators begin to talk to big business, they do not talk or

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think in terms of women. Defending the small class size to business interests at a meeting of academic and business leaders, Peter Armacost, President of Ottawa Univerity, Ottawa, Kansas, argued: "We're in the business of producing growth and learning, and it could be one man teaching a small class is much more productive than one man teaching a big class."

The language is revealing, as is the language used by Elizabeth McCormack in discussing the appointment of the first male president in the century and a quarter history of Manhattanville College. McCormack—who has served in the distinguished tradition of the women before her, Grace Dammann and Eleanor O'Byrne—explained that the search committee reviewed hundreds of candidates but "found the right man in our own backyard." The search committee, charged with finding a president for this small, private college which has recently become coeducational and which suffers the financial stresses of all such under-endowed institutions, apparently felt they needed a-man-for-the-job. The chairman of the search committee, Peter McCulough, is the president of Xerox.

* * *

Though creating an awesome picture of new battles to be fought in the financially difficult years ahead, the above statistics and reflections offer some personal illumination. For years I have puzzled over a remark made to me by the director of Graduate Studies in the English Department at the University of Michigan. "You seem serious about your studies, Margaret," he said. "Have you ever thought about becoming a nun?' It was not that the remark was made by a non-Catholic at a large secular university that startled me, but the fact that for some years I had been considering entering the convent and I wondered how he knew. But now I think I understand it all: in those days I also wanted to be a college president.

We would not want to argue that a young woman who aspired to a leadership role in higher education should enter the convent, nor that the women's college should necessarily be revived. We rejoice in the new order that allows Elizabeth McCormack, as she leaves Manhattanville and the religious life, to accept a handsomely paid job with a national foundation. But we should be aware that the erosion of two preserves of women's power—the Sisterhood and the sisterhood of the women's college—may seriously reduce the number of women college administrators. This in addition to the well-documented discrimination in salary and rank against women college faculty suggests that the century and a half struggle initiated by Mary Lyon in 1837 to make women full citizens of the academic world has far from achieved its end. The point is, of course, that as long as women administrators and academicians are not full citizens of that world, women undergraduates never will be either.

HEAD GAMES

THE SCREEN

In Sam Peckinpah's new film, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*, Alfredo's part is indeed played by the mere part mentioned in the title. In a way this makes Alfredo the perfect antagonist for a Peckinpah movie, and the very character whom Peckinpah's work has been striving to create for years. After catching a glimpse of Alfredo's classic Latin features in a locket photo during the opening scene, we don't lay eyes on him again until about half way through, when his head is being carried around in a burlap bag by an amateur bounty hunter named Benny (Warren Oates). Benny is hoping to collect a large reward that has been offered privately for Alfredo's head, and now that he has exhumed the head from Alfredo's grave in his native village, his only problem is getting it back to the man who put the price on it. It's quite a trip.

Peckinpah begins the trip by having Benny open the door of his car and throw the bag containing the head onto the seat. It's a moment done in that inimitable Peckinpah style. To capture the moment, Peckinpah puts a wide-angle lens on his camera and positions the camera on the edge of the car's seat. The head is thrown right into our laps, as it were, while the camera gives us a lap's-eye view. The lens distorts the action, making the head balloon out at us at it falls, making it loom large in our cringing consciousness. This head bouncing across the seat at us in its bag has very much the same effect as the shoot-outs in *The Wild Bunch*, the siege of the farmhouse in *Straw Dogs*, and the blast aimed in our faces from a shotgun filled with dimes in *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid.*

The intention never varies from one Peckinpah film to the next. It is always to rub our noses in violence, to protract violence so that we can have the experience of it, can examine and contemplate it, more fully even than those who experience it first-hand. This is why Peckinpah has so often used slow motion at the climax of his films, to draw out for us the supersensory, otherwise ungraspable moment, and the purpose in making Alfredo's head into Benny's baggage is comparable. In fact, this severed head seems in many ways just the ultimate logical extension of all those slow-motion eruptions of blood and gore in earlier Peckinpah works. The head becomes an emblem of violence, a fixed symbol that at last arrests the fleeting process which earlier films could only slow down a little. It allows us to spend an hour in the presence of all those ruptured arteries and detached members which Peckinpah's earlier films could only hold on the screen for a few, exaggerated minutes.

The head also reduces Peckinpah's argument to an

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absurdity. If the slow-motion "brutal ballet" was the sublime version of what Peckinpah has to say, Alfredo's head is the ridiculous. This is so because the head dilates the effects of violence not only in time, but in emotional pitch. Violence now becomes at least a normal experience, if not a normative one. While driving with the head on the seat beside him, Benny cuffs and berates it as if it were some paid traveling companion who hasn't worked out. Like a man who is simply on tour he stops for a beer at a roadside cafe, and when he gets back to his apartment he packs the head in dry ice the way somebody might save the leftovers from a picnic in order to get one more meal out of them.

The only thing redeeming *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* at all is that Peckinpah himself seems to realize his ballet has here become a burlesque. At least, he doesn't resist the natural tendency of his material to turn out this way. This is apparent enough in almost all the scenes of the return journey with the head, but it is even more apparent in the climactic scene of the journey which brought Benny out to Alfredo's village in the first place. Just as the head is his traveling companion on the way home, his companion on the way out is a girlfriend named Anita (Isela Vega). Benny's relationship with Anita has its ups and downs much as his relationship with the head does, and in fact the two simply exchange places as if there were no difference between them.

Having been knocked unconscious at the moment he retrieves the head from its grave, Benny awakes to find himself buried alive in that same grave with Anita, who is now dead. What ensues is the most grotesque and, at the same time, effective scene in the film. Not realizing that Anita is dead, or maybe not being able to distinguish life from death anymore, Benny pleads for her to come along with him as he struggles to unearth himself. But when it finally dawns on him that she can't do so, he just shrugs it off as if they were only having a squabble, some minor difference of opinion of the sort lovers are forever falling into. "Okay, stay here if you want," he says petulantly, like a man who thinks that his walking away might bring a woman back from the dead as readily as it could make her regret a quarrel. The audience laughs out loud at the way Peckinpah plays this scene, which is, I think, precisely what Peckinpah wants.

The failure of *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* is that none of Anita's earlier scenes, when she was still alive, is anywhere near as interesting. The film is unbalanced, not only structurally because Anita's journey out with Benny is not so well done as the head's journey back with him, but mentally too, because Peckinpah has this necrophiliac's reaction to life—because he is incapable of imagining healthy, erotic feelings the way he can those that are distraught and morbid. Perhaps what goes wrong in his films is that no man can fancy violence the only fundamental experience the way he does without losing all sense of what the other fundamental experiences in life are like. Whatever the reason, the love scenes between Benny and Anita are embarrassing to watch. We so shrink from them that it is difficult for Alfredo's head to upset us much afterwards. All things considered, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* is, like Peckinpah's other recent work, an originally seen and directed film, but an inhuman one.

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BOOKS

THE MODERN UNIVERSITY

DENNIS O'BRIEN

Our Invaded Universities
RONNIE DUGGER
Norton, $14.95

The Idea of a Modern University
SIDNEY HOOK, PAUL KURTZ, MIRO TODOROVICH, EDS.
Prometheus, $10

When Frederick Rudolph published his general history of American colleges and universities in 1962 he remarked that "for some time . . . the general reader and the professional historian have had greater access to the history of almost any skirmish of the Civil War than they have to the history of education in the United States." In the late '60s, colleges and universities joined in what some alarmed observers judged to be a new civil war. Having fought their own skirmishes, colleges might now hope to receive equal time in the history books. The two volumes at hand have their genesis in this recent time of troubles but they do not cure the historical inattentiveness to which colleges have been subject.

There may be a deep reason why histories of the academy are scarce. To write historically about something is to give it a palpable time and place and yet there is something at the core of the academic tradition that denies these necessary factors of historicity. Does not the university locate itself universally, not particularly and parochially? Its body may be in Oxford or Austin but its mind—its true life—is transcendent, cosmopolitan, at home in all ages and places of men. Physicists in Princeton commune with Faraday and the physicists of Peking. It is true that

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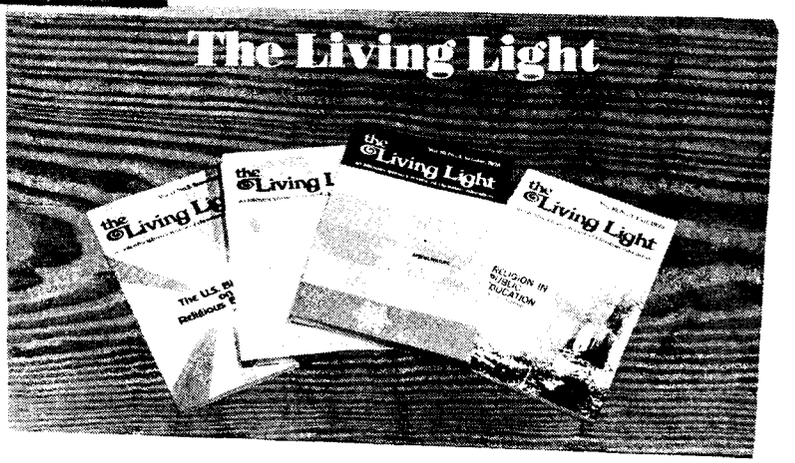

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in some of the value-loaded areas of scholarship localist sins are committed, but these lapses are nowhere condoned. Various intellectual asceticisms are urged to cure such falls from transcendence. The historical mind revels in the nuance of place and time that captures the particular and unique. Professors, perforce, shun the particular and unique to produce universal results. Thus, histories of the academic places may simply bypass the principal gesture of the academic life. It is only when colleges lose sight of their transcendent being and enter into the particularities of politics that they are of real interest to historians—that is, precisely when they cease acting as colleges.

It is the major burden of *The Idea of a Modern University* that universities in the sixties lost sight of their inner rationale—that they strayed into history and politics at the cost of the academy's deepest purpose and values. The book is a compilation of papers and comments offered at a conference held at Rockefeller University in 1972 under the sponsorship of University Centers for Rational Alternatives. UCRA is a group organized in late 1968 under the leadership of Sidney Hook to combat the "onslaught of extremist students"—"the barbarians of virtue" as Todorovich calls them in his preface. UCRA is right of center in the spectrum of politics among academics —remembering that the academic profession is reasonably left of center in the country as a whole. UCRA members come on as moderate centrists with sturdy, conventional views about the sacredness of academic freedom and the need to keep the colleges out of direct political action. The essays wander far afield: the elite character of higher education, affirmative action, collective bargaining, open admissions, tenure, news media and so on.

Almost a third of the contributors are philosophers—a notable disproportion in any cross section of academic types. Most of the other contributors are social scientists. There is one physicist but there are no professors of literature, no poets. While it is difficult to generalize about such a pot-pourri of views, nevertheless there is a recurrent neo-Platonism that colors the whole discussion. It was Plato who advised philosophers to shun the world of history and search for the eternal, if non-existent, Idea. The major effect of the arguments presented in this symposiac search for the Idea of a modern university is that there is so little attention paid to its actual history.

The neglect of history is obvious in major and minor ways. There are various suppositions offered for the cause of student rebellion is the '60s but very few facts are ever adduced to support these hypotheses. Abba Lerner blandly suggests that those students who followed the protest leaders were "young people who came to the universities for irrelevant reasons . . . to avoid the draft . . . to obtain tickets of entry to jobs." If he has any hard evidence for that it would be interesting to see it since most of the social science studies of protesting students indicate that they were better students than the non-protesting ones. If Lerner were correct, one should have expected riots at Siwash, not Harvard. The late Glenn Morrow, a distinguished Platonic scholar, suggested that a cause of the decline in faculties toward mindless activism was that "the academic career now offers prospects of financial reward sufficient to attract persons who would otherwise have no interest in it." I can only believe that devotion to his beloved philosophical master would have caused Professor Morrow to prefer this glittering plausibility to muddy fact.

But the real failure of historical sense does not lie in the philosopher's usual cavalier treatment of empirical detail, it is much deeper. The greatest of the neo-Platonists, Plotinus, was reported to have lived his days as if embarrassed to have a body. The tendency to dis-embody human enterprise and live a life of pure mind is Platonism's favorite dream. One can see why it constantly tempts acolytes of the academy where mind is so celebrated. The neo-Platonic strain runs through the entire catch-bag of arguments. By and large the UCRA members are opposed to affirmative ac-

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tion and open admissions, and they affirm the notion that universities are for the intellectual elite. Decisions for admissions, faculty appointment and promotion are strictly matters of mind —not the color or shape of bodies.

It may be true in some sense that the intellectual life is a life of the mind, but the *teaching* life is a life of concrete persons with bodies of certain age, color and sex. Bodies have place and time and histories, even if minds live in eternal truth. Historical colleges exist to teach individual human beings. Even if the aim were to get students into the Platonic heaven rather than Yale Graduate School, one would still have to start with actually embodied persons whose sex, racial history, cultural and physical development might well dictate teaching strategies which relied on factors other than pure mental wattage. One doesn't trade off talent for mediocrity in the proper hue and shape, but lesser than genius often inspires genius for factors quite irrelevant to pure intellectual attainment. There must be something to the argument that women can be hampered in their intellectual aspirations if the only ones who play the intellectual role are men. A college which educates women alongside men in the classroom may quite legitimately adopt as a *teaching* strategy a preference for qualified women if its faculty is, as most are, largely male.

While the UCRA participants downplay the fact that there are students with histories, they also fail to see the American college as an historical institution within American society. Surely colleges would not be having remedial programs, open admissions, affirmative action except for very concrete facts about American life. I would admit that in the pure logic of the Platonic academy, these facets of current college life are irrational, but colleges always live here and now a task of teaching a society in its current historical state. American colleges have not been ascetic retreats for intellectual elites, they have been instruments for social change through education. If there is a need for social change as regards blacks, women or whatever, it is sure that the college will be asked to serve.

Our Invaded Universities by Ronnie Dugger might appear to compensate for the attenuated sense of history displayed in the UCRA conference. Despite its universal title, the book is really a history of the University of Texas in Austin from its inception to the present. Where the previous book is full of discussion of high philosophical principle, Dugger's work is overflowing with factual detail. There are descriptions of scene (the Tower, the stadium) extensive character sketches (even with mini-photographs), long conversations, quotes from reports, newspaper stories and so on. Like most things Texan, the book seems to me several sizes too big, but it is full of the kinds of accounts of academic infighting, nasty board meetings, the firing of top administrators, that do not often make it into institutional histories.

The central action of the book and its dramatic denouement is the rise and fall of the University, as Dugger sees it,

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under the presidency of Harry Ransom in the '60s. Ransom, with the help of some massive funding, attracted to the University an exceptional group of faculty and top administrators headed by the brilliant, difficult and arrogant John Silber. Whole departments were hired or fired, elderly and revered heads with international reputations were bounced if they stood in the way of revitalization, exciting teaching plans were devised, journals founded, curricula revised. It was a heady time indeed and the reputation of Texas soared as famous scholars like William Arrowsmith settled down in Austin. However, while all this excitement was being generated from Dean Silber's office, the board of regents, dominated by conservative Texas business interests, saw something very different. They saw student protest against the Texas president, they saw drugs and sexual freedom, they heard professors calling for "revolution." The regents reacted like the elderly Texas matron who denounced UT saying it was full of "Socialism and Sodobottomy!" Frank Erwin, the pawerful chairman of the regents, engineered Silber's firing and the University returned to a state all too frequent in its history of heavy-handed regental repression.

That is the outline of the story and anyone who wants lots of additional juicy detail should consult Dugger's book. What I am not convinced of, however, is that he will get the real history of the University of Texas. Dugger very loosely organizes the book as a drama and divisions in the text are labelled act one, act two and so on. I am always suspicious of dramatized history, even one as loosely cast as Dugger's. In this case, however, the dramatic convention carries the day. The book is basically an adult western. The essence of western is mythic—the forces of good and evil battle it out timelessly in the sunbaked streets somewhere west of the Pecos. The sociologic complexities of a society, the deep characters of the participants remain opaque as they act out their assigned liturgies.

In Dugger's book the lines of good and bad are as clearly drawn as in the classic western and as easily identified —the mythos is not, of course, horse opera, it is the universal faculty club scenario for the dangers which beset the university. Repressive political regents, mild-mannered socialist professors, duplicitous administrators, ignored and sensitive students are figures in the accepted mythos of the beleagured academy. I do not doubt that Dugger has applied the moral labels correctly, but the pattern cleaves so closely to the standard myth that I wonder if it could really be like that in actual life. In myth, the exact motivations of certain key characters remain opaque. Erwin comes through awful but unbelievable; a destructive force, not a character issuing from human choices. In history, the actual texture of place is important, but Dugger's story is so standard that I finally lost the special sense of a university in Texas—perhaps that is why he thought a case study of Texas was a case study of all universities. Is the relation between regents and university at Austin the same as in a state like Massachusetts where great private colleges have existed for years; in California where education has paid off better in terms of technological industry; in Michigan where the university is a coordinate branch of state government established by the Michigan constitution? The lavish detail of Dugger's account never penetrates the stock story so that one is left with bright historical decoration over standard myth. I am sure that the regents were villains, but they would be more interesting as malicious historical Texans than as mythic demons.

Journey to Upolu: Robert Louis Stevenson, Victorian Rebel

EDWARD RICE

Dodd, Mead, $6.95

MARK TAYLOR

The "Victorian Rebel" of Mr. Rice's sub-title can be taken seriously though it is applied to a man who spent much time on the Continent and in Scotland,

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America, and the South Pacific, and very little in Victorian England itself. Actually, I've grown tired of "Victorian" as a pejorative, but if it still conveys sensible scrupulosity in financial matters, the Pukka Sahib's benign hauteur toward other nations and races, and an avoidance of matters sexual, then let RLS's enlightenment be recorded. Against all odds (his father being a man of wealth and of considerable, if erratic, generosity) he maintained a state of extreme privation until nearly the end of his short life. His commitment to the earth's oppressed was such that he could write, "That the Jew should not love the Christian, nor the Irishman the English, nor the Indian brave tolerate the thought of the American, is not disgraceful to the nature of man; rather, indeed, honorable, since it depends on wrongs ancient like the race, and not personal to him who cherishes the indignation." And after a youth spent in the brothels of Edinburgh, he showed a strong proclivity to fall in love with the wives of other men. The one of these whom he married, Mrs. Fanny Van der Grift Osbourne, came to him with two children and also—it was rumored, unkindly but to RLS perhaps gratifying—with Negro blood. Her daughter-in-law, who unaccountably hated Fanny, wrote of her that "she belonged to the childhood of the race—the first beginning civilization—in some dark-skinned peoples."

The Scots, from Sir Walter Scott through RLS, John Buchan, and Alastair MacLean, make wonderful storytellers, and it is a sign of the modern disregard for that craft that RLS is known mainly today, in America, as a writer of children's books, though neither *Treasure Island* nor *Kidnapped* was written for, nor originally received by, children. So it is difficult not to like a book that reminds us what a remarkable chap RLS was, and does so in a text that can be read in a couple of hours, accompanied by more photographs than you could have printed at the drugstore for seven dollars. And I do like *Journey to Upolu* (the name of RLS's Pacific paradise), which I forgive for offering no real consideration of the novels, for refusing to divulge the source of the marvelous letters it quotes, and for never getting inside the man. But as someone else asked recently, don't publishers use editors anymore? It is exasperating to find three typos in the first three pages; to have Joseph Conrad plumped down in London, a famous literary man, at age 16; to have the *quattrocento* glossed as the fourteenth century; and on the book's last page to have the playwright Edward Field, husband of RLS's stepdaughter, become Edward Field*ing* a sentence after he is introduced.

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

REVIEWERS

DENNIS O'BRIEN is a professor of philosophy and author of *Hegel on Reason and History* (U. of Chicago Press).

MARK TAYLOR teaches in the English Department at Manhattan College.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 3)

man with the blood of Attica on his hands, a man who left New York City in shambles, a man who rewrote the death penalty, a man who supported the aggressive war in Vietnam, a man with vast Imperialist holdings in Latin America, in all a man of business-military-monopolist character for Vice President of the United States.

Need I say more?

EARL SMITH

Correction

There was a typographical error in the Julian of Norwich quotation in Abigail McCarthy's column of Aug. 9. The second of the three manners cited for the beholding of the motherhood in God should have read "taking of our kind" (a reference to the incarnation), not taking of our "king."

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